



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Providing Reading Interventions

April 2007

Topic: Teaching Literacy in English to K-5 English Learners

Practice: Provide Reading Interventions

Highlights

- Definition of a reading intervention as an intensive teaching approach that offers extra support to students
- Description of the characteristics of effective reading interventions
- What Works Clearinghouse contains reviews of programs showing positive results with English language learners
- Tips for supporting reading interventions including school-wide collaboration, professional development and teacher collaboration
- Big idea: Don't wait to provide reading interventions to English learners—whatever their level of English language proficiency

Full Transcript

Slide #1

Welcome to the overview on Providing Reading Interventions.

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This is the first grade class of Carla Flores. The students here are a diverse bunch: they come from different parts of the world and speak many different languages. Though many of the students don't yet have the skills to speak English well, Mrs. Flores is already teaching them to read. That's because Mrs. Flores knows all students have the ability to learn to read in English, no matter what their background. Some may just need more instruction than others—especially English learners. To assist these students, Mrs. Flores and the other teachers at her school use a reading intervention program.

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A reading intervention program is an intensive teaching approach that focuses on an area of difficulty in reading and offers specific solutions. As one component of reading instruction, interventions provide students with extra support that complements the regular core reading program. Interventions offer students a "double dose" of the reading instruction they need—helping them to master problem areas and at the same time allowing them to keep pace in the reading lessons with rest of the class.

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As a central part of daily reading instruction, interventions last for at least 30-50 minutes a day and are conducted in small groups of no more than six students. As they master skills, students leave the intervention and the teacher addresses other difficulties shared by the remaining students. Throughout the school year, students may even return to the intervention to brush up on skills.

What's most important, though, is that the lessons in the intervention are always responding to each student's unique needs. Reading interventions aren't just for English learners—they are meant to help ALL students who need it. As long as students share the same reading difficulties, they can share the same reading intervention. This makes interventions an asset to ANY school's reading program.

Slide #5

Before teachers can begin a reading intervention program, they should conduct formative

assessments to determine exactly who needs additional help, what they need to be taught, and how much teaching time is needed. Because formative assessments gauge student progress and tell teachers when students are ready to leave the intervention, they should be used during the course of a reading intervention to track the progress of the group and make decisions about what should happen next for each student. It's only through ongoing decision-making based on formative assessments that a teacher can ensure students get the most from the reading intervention program.

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Ok, so let's say your school has a good formative assessment system in place. You now know which students are having reading problems and what the problems are. What's next? It's time to choose a reading intervention program. Of the numerous intervention programs and approaches, it's important to choose one having these four essential characteristics. Interventions should explicitly instruct the full range of reading skills: phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, word recognition, connected text fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. Include activities that give students the opportunity to respond to questions, either individually or in unison. Give students lots of opportunities to practice reading both words and sentences. Provide clear teacher feedback when students make errors, and then model correct responses. By incorporating these four characteristics, interventions can help students quickly master the skills they need and continue to make progress in the school's reading instruction program.

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Of the many programs and approaches that provide additional support in addressing reading difficulties, a few reading interventions have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) as potentially positive for their effects on English learners. You can view these intervention programs and other information about reading interventions at the WWC website.

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So you've used formative assessments to find students who need additional help in reading, and you've chose an intervention program right for students—what's next? Promoting oral English skills. The first step toward improving oral English skills is to make sure that English Learners can follow instructions and participate—not only during interventions, but also in the regular classroom. Teachers can help students understand lessons in many different ways, including: using visual supports or gestures, modeling exercises, and clarifying directions. Interventions should include a

story retelling—activities that can really help build oral language proficiency. That's because English learners are increasing the words they understand and get to practice using them to convey ideas. And all of this supports the development of reading comprehension, which is the real goal of reading instruction.

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Determining student needs through formative assessments? Choosing a program that addresses the right components of reading? Promoting oral English skills? It sounds like teachers need to be highly skilled to conduct successful reading interventions... And they will. But successful interventions rest on more than just skillful teachers—they also rely on having strong school support.

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Here are some tips for supporting successful, smooth-running reading interventions at a school.

Collaborate to schedule the intervention. The school principal and teachers need to work together to decide when additional teaching interventions can be provided. They also need to coordinate reading interventions with other services that English learners may be receiving. This is no easy task in the already-hectic classroom schedule. But remember: reading interventions are short term and a great way to keep students on track with reading. The extra time you spend on them is worth it.

Provide professional development. Interventions are multi-faceted approaches that require training, practice, and feedback for teachers to implement. Most interventions require teachers to include 6-10 short activities within a 30-minute period. During this time period, teachers are required to cover a range of reading skills. Teachers will need the opportunity to learn how to balance all these tasks using the specific intervention materials their school has chosen. Though many different staff members—classroom teachers, reading coaches or specialists, Title I staff or ESL/bilingual teachers—can provide these interventions, ALL are likely to need professional development to learn to do use them effectively.

Build time for teacher collaboration. The school will also need to schedule time for teachers to have collaborative discussions and share assessment data—what students are having difficulty and why—to group and regroup students. This ongoing teacher-to-teacher communication is critical to the overall success of a school's reading program.

Slide #11

So what's the first step? Action. Don't wait to provide extra reading support to English learners—act NOW! Just because an English learner is still learning to speak English does not mean she cannot

start learning to read English. Waiting to identify and address reading difficulties only increases the risk that the student will get behind in learning to read. That's why it's important to start your intervention program today!

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To learn more about reading interventions, including more next steps, see the additional resources on this website.